

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT MATTERS

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Visit the PM Website:

<http://infoweb/DMB/pfmeasure.htm>



MEASURING COUNTYWIDE PERFORMANCE

While Fairfax County has become fairly adept at measuring performance at the agency level, it is now time to look at how we can be more accountable to the public for overall performance as a county. This is typically done with high-level measures, which often encompass more than one agency's efforts. An example could be air quality where several agencies are charged with responsibilities that affect this outcome. Or it could be domestic violence where a variety of agencies such as the Police Department, the Courts, and the Department of Family Services among others, play a part in reducing the incidence of abuse. Before reporting data however, there must be consensus on what the County will measure as part of an overall scorecard on performance.

A good starting point is the County's Core Purpose as well as the associated Vision Elements (see below). These enable us to focus on what is important – where we want to go strategically – and then we can develop measures that will tell if we are making progress on achieving those vision elements.

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County by:

- ♦ Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities

- ♦ Practicing Environmental Stewardship
- ♦ Building Livable Spaces
- ♦ Maintaining Healthy Economies
- ♦ Connecting People and Places
- ♦ Creating a Culture of Engagement
- ♦ Exercising Corporate Stewardship

As noted above, County senior staff will be discussing what we should be measuring for each of these vision elements in order to convey how well as a county we are meeting them. In some cases, there are probably already existing measures that can be used. For many others however, new measures will have to be developed. An important factor to consider is how well the measure helps us tell the County's story. Is it something the public can understand and support? Are data currently available? If not, do we have a way of collecting it? Where multiple agencies are concerned, there must also be agreement on how the data will be collected to ensure consistency from one agency to another.

As part of the current Budget Process Redesign and strategic planning efforts, agencies are already looking at how what they do aligns with these vision elements. These connections will be highlighted in the FY 2005 budget. Concurrent with those connections will be the

development of Countywide measures of success or "Key Community Outcomes" that will enable us to provide information to elected officials, managers and most importantly, citizens, on how well their County is performing.

It is anticipated that there will be a section in the annual budget presenting this information since this is the document on which the public and the Board of Supervisors typically focus. In addition to results data on the various Key Community Outcomes, it is envisioned that benchmarking data made available through the International City/County Management Association's Center for Performance Measurement will also be shown. Benchmarking helps place performance data in context, i.e., how are we doing compared to other large local governments? This enables decision-makers and others to determine if the level of service we are providing is appropriate and is yet another way of telling the performance story.

AUGUST BROWNBAG

The dog days of August will be bringing more than just hot, humid weather. The PM Team will be offering its quarterly brownbag lunch on Thursday, August 7 from noon until 1:00 p.m. in Room 120C of the Government Center.

As is typically the case for the August brownbag, this one will be a quick refresher on Fairfax County's methodology as well as a review of the PM database that was first introduced last summer.

If your training was some time ago and you just can't quite remember the difference between an output and an outcome, consider bringing your lunch to take advantage of this training just in time for preparation of your FY 2005 budget requests.

No RSVP is necessary; just show up for this hour-long session. Any questions about this event should be directed to Barbara Emerson at 703-324-3009.



**Good thoughts are no better
than good dreams unless they
are executed.**

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

PM TEAM

The Performance Measurement (PM) Team is a multi-agency team consisting of 15 members from 12 different agencies. This team serves as a resource and steering committee for the County's PM efforts as well as enhances the capacity for performance measurement across agencies. Each spring, members are given the opportunity to cycle off the team if they wish (there is a minimum one-year commitment). This year, only one member chose that option and was replaced with another individual who expressed an interest in learning more about performance measurement. The following is the current composition of the team. Feel free to contact any members if you have any questions about the County's PM efforts.

| Name | Agency | Telephone | E-Mail |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|--------|
| Barbara Emerson, Coordinator | Department of Management and Budget | 324-3009 | BEMERS |
| Sheila Bishop | Department of Vehicle Services | 324-3541 | SBISHO |
| Evan Braff | Department of Community and Recreation Services | 324-5650 | EBRAFF |
| Evy Duff | Health Department | 246-2947 | EDUFF0 |
| Dick Eckert | Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board | 934-8737 | RECKER |
| Anne Fu | Department of Public Works and Environmental Services/ Business Planning and Support | 324-1832 | LFU000 |
| Liz Henry | Department of Family Services | 324-7889 | MHENR1 |
| Mila Jao | Department of Finance | 324-3150 | MJAO00 |
| Stephen Knippler | Department of Housing and Community Development | 246-5161 | SKNIPP |
| Doug Miller | Fairfax County Public Library | 324-8322 | DMILL4 |
| Eric Mills | Police Department | 246-4299 | EMILLS |
| Allison Owen | Department of Management and Budget | 324-2044 | AOWEN1 |
| Allison Page | Department of Family Services | 324-3528 | APAGE0 |
| Cathy Spage | Department of Information Technology | 324-3870 | CSPAGE |
| Bill Yake | Department of Management and Budget | 324-2030 | WYAKE0 |

Performance Measures: Looking Beyond Your Unit

Evan Braff, Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services

When an organization performs a diverse set of missions, it is usually natural and comfortable for it to compartmentalize the work and minimize the scope regarding the impact that a specific unit may have on global performance indicators. While the narrow scope may be a comfortable and efficient way of organizing the work, it does not allow an organization to achieve high performance – the LEAD/HPO training teaches us that. Organizations that can integrate services and programs, and find common links across other units, departments and agencies are going to be the most successful. This article will give an overview of the efforts taking place in the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation (CRS).

In FY 2000, CRS began its strategic planning initiative by inviting employees from all levels of the organization to provide their input on the future

direction of the agency. As a result of this input, many employees saw the need for more collaboration across units within the agency as part of providing programs and services. Failure to collaborate was perceived as a significant impediment to the agency – continuing the stovepipe mentality would continue to prevent our organization from achieving high performance.

Based on this feedback, the agency began a process of regionalizing services (employees from different units would develop and implement integrated services in a specific region). In addition to regionalizing services, the agency formed teams for specific agency projects; e.g., volunteer and youth appreciation programs. These teams enabled the various specialized units to share and maximize their resources and knowledge, instead of competing among themselves. While each of the separate units may have recognized

their volunteers within their own specific programs, this was the first agency-wide effort. Over 350 volunteers were recognized at this event with elected officials and County Senior Management Team members attending the event. An event of this magnitude would not have been possible without shared resources.

Subsequently, employees have seen the benefits of working together. This has stimulated a process of employee discussion groups concerning the service areas that each unit has in common and how those services can be tied to universal performance measures. For example, it was determined that it would be beneficial to develop performance measures around all of the health education classes that are offered by the agency. It is more powerful to cite the impact of class attendance by over 30,000 instead of 500 in a specific division. Additionally,

employees are more willing to share resources because of the common themes.

Having universal performance measures moves employees from their stovepipe outlook and brings an organization to a higher level of purpose and efficiency in the long run.

If you would like more information on what is happening in the Department of Community and Recreation Services, please contact Evan Braff at (703) 324-5650 or evan.braff@fairfaxcounty.gov.



*A vision
without a
task is a
dream—a
task
without a
vision is
drudgery—
but a task*

*with vision can change the
world.*

— Black Elk